

## POLICY

POLICY NUMBER

160.000

TITLE: RESPONDING TO PUBLIC DISCLOSURE REQUESTS & OTHER INQUIRIES

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EFFECTIVE DATE:	September 28, 2007
AUTHORITY:	General authority of the Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs, hereinafter referred to as Department, to manage and direct the Department, RCW 43.60A.040, .050, and .060.
PURPOSE:	To provide guidelines for answering questions or public disclosure requests from the media, legislative staff or any other persons outside the Department about programs, policy/procedural issues or internal operations. And to provide guidelines for media access to State Veterans Home facilities and residents.
APPLICABILITY:	All employees within the Department.
DEFINITIONS:	<u>Designated management staff</u> – Director Deputy Director Communications Director Executive Assistant to the Director & Deputy Director Superintendents Associate Superintendents Chief Financial Officer Chief of HR, IT and Strategic Planning Chief of Homes Operations
POLICY:	<p>I. <b>Legislative, Governor, Media &amp; Other Outside Inquiries:</b></p> <p>A. All inquiries from the Governor's Office, State/Federal Legislature, media and members of the public with questions about the Department's programs, policy/procedural issues or internal operations shall be referred to the Communications Director.</p> <p>B. If the inquiry involves an issue that may be controversial, designated management staff must immediately notify the Communications Director.</p> <p>C. If appropriate, the Communications Director will assist in drafting the response for the designated management staff to provide.</p>

**II. Public Disclosure Requests:**

**A.** Public Disclosure Requests must be responded to within 5 days of receipt of the request.

**B.** If the request involves research and will take more than 5 days, the Communications Director will contact the individual who made the request and give them a date when the response/material will be completed.

**C.** A record of the date and the nature of the contact will be maintained according to the Department's records management program.

**D.** Designated management staff shall contact the Communications Director when they receive requests for public records.

**E.** The Department creates or receives information/records that are confidential and may not be released without proper authority. Confidential records include but are not limited to:

1. Resident medical records;
2. Client administrative files; and
3. Personnel records.

**F.** Individuals who request copies of public records must pay a reasonable charge for:

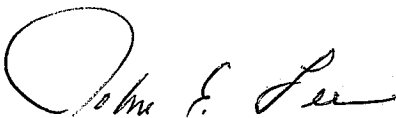
1. Copies; and
2. Administrative time used to research and answer a question.

REVIEW: This policy shall be reviewed and update every three years.

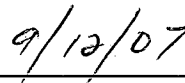
REFERENCES: RCW 42.17.250 through 312  
DVA HIPAA POLICY 170.000 - 170.500

SUPERSESSSION DVA Policy 160.000 dated January 30, 2004; DVA policy 14-01  
Responding to Public Inquiries dated January 20, 1995.

ATTACHMENTS: Request for Public Records #160.000 (A); Response to Public  
Records Requests # 160.000 (B).



John E. Lee, Director



Date

WASHINGTON STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF  
**VETERANS  
AFFAIRS**



**RESPONSE TO PUBLIC RECORDS  
REQUESTS**

**Inquiry Number 0000**

**Response to Public Records Requests**

<b>Date</b>	
<b>To</b>	
<b>From</b>	
<b>Date Request Received</b>	
<b>Method of Request Received</b>	
<b>Information Requested</b>	
<b>Agency Response</b>	

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs Request for Public Records

To help us facilitate your request, please complete the form below. The information requested in blocks 4 and 5 is not mandatory, however, the completion of these blocks will enable this office to expedite your request and contact you, should the information you seek not be immediately available.

1. Name:

2. Phone:

3. Address:

4. Representing: (if applicable)

5. If Urgent -- Date Needed:

Please identify the information you are requesting to review. Be as specific as possible. There will be a charge of .15 per page. There will be a reasonable administration cost for staff time to research and copy documents.

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I certify that the information requested will not be used for commercial purposes.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this request for inspection of records to  
**Public Relations Office**  
**Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**1011 Plum Street 2<sup>nd</sup> floor**  
**PO Box 41150**  
**Olympia, WA 98504-1150**

*Requests will be acknowledged within five working days of arrival at Washington State  
Department of Veterans Affairs*